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Dear Clients,

This has been an unprecedented week in terms of the changes to our systems of work and school, as well as our daily lives as a result of COVID-19. It is understandable to feel uncertain and to have concerns. I am writing to you to share my thoughts and outline the actions being taken to help clients navigate their mental health care during this period.

Protecting Your Health, Your Family's Health and the Health of our Healthcare System

Based upon the most recent information from the Ontario Medical Association, limiting person-to-person interactions, more commonly known as "physical distancing" (or "social distancing"), is the best means to minimize the impact of the COVID-19 virus as it interrupts the chain of transmission. Although these steps are disruptive to everyday life, they afford protection to patients, health care professionals, and members of our community, as well as an ethical approach to avoid a surge in COVID-19 cases that would exceed the capacity of the health care system.

As such, I have decided to refrain from in-person meetings with clients and to switch to virtual and telephone meetings to deliver mental health care to clients.

Technology-Assisted Care

Mental health services will be offered to clients via telephone and Zoom Media. Zoom offers a secure (PHIPA/HIPAA compliant) and user-friendly video-conferencing service. [To use Zoom requires use of an App on either a desktop or mobile phone.](#) Please visit the following links to learn more:

1. Zoom Mobile Apps for [iPhone](#) or [Android](#) (free)
2. Try a [test](#) meeting for Zoom on your desktop

I will be in touch with you shortly to inquire about your preferences and technological capabilities.

Currently, I am examining encrypted email solutions to communicate with you (eg., share written information, such as educational materials and receipts). I will share an update with you shortly. Payments can continue to be made via e-transfer.

Changes to Service Delivery

As we connect with each other using alternative modes and technologies, it would be helpful to discuss a few new policies and practices. A written consent form will be made available for review and discussion.

Service Hours

While it would be my preference to continue meeting during the same hours of service, it is understandable that a change in meeting times may be needed in order to accommodate clients' schedules and responsibilities. I look forward to hearing more about your needs in this regard.

Alternative Options

Your well-being is important to me. Some clients may have concerns about trying new modalities for therapy, adequate privacy at home, and/or challenges in securing child-free time to participate. These concerns are understandable. At this time, it is unlikely that any in-person services will be available in our community. Note that Ontario physicians are also migrating their services to tele-health, as well (phone, secure video). As each client's situation is unique, I invite you to discuss what might be best for you in this emerging situation.

Be Vigilant About Fraud

It is important to be vigilant against those who are seeking to commit fraud. I will not send you unsolicited emails asking for confidential information (eg., passwords, PINs, credit card numbers, health information, etc.) or asking for you to make purchases. Please contact me by phone if you receive an email and are unsure if it originated from my account.

Take Care

As a reminder, if you develop symptoms (fever, cough, difficulty breathing), please stay home. Phone your family physician, Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 or your local [public health unit](#) for guidance.

The following resources from government, health authorities and national associations may also be of assistance:

- Public Health Agency of Canada's advice regarding physical distancing by avoiding public gatherings and practicing good health hygiene ([Link](#))
- National Association of School Psychologists - Parent and Teacher Resources ([Link](#))
- Ontario Ministry of Health ([Link](#))
- Public Health Ontario ([Link](#))
- Government of Canada ([Link](#))

Staying Informed

Please note that, at this time, it is not possible to predict when in-person meetings will resume. This decision will be guided by the information provided by local, provincial and federal health authorities who are monitoring the status of the outbreak and the health risk for Canadians. I

have been, and will continue to, monitor the situation related to COVID-19. I will communicate any developments or changes in my practice to you as they become available.

It will be a pleasure to resume in-person meetings when it is deemed safe to do so.

As before, please continue to email (drpaulamiceli@gmail.com) or call (416-275-3735) if you have any questions or concerns. I will be reaching out in the next few days to discuss the best ways to move forward in our work together.

Sincerely,

Paula Miceli, Ph.D., C.Psych.
Clinical & Health Psychologist (#6027)